

Mr. GUTKNECHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like my colleagues to join me in a little visualization, the Members that are gathered here and perhaps others here in the Chamber. This story, I will give credit, came from John Fund who is an editorial writer, and I would like you all to close your eyes for a minute if it makes it easier. Imagine for a minute that you go home today and open your mail and there is a letter there from an attorney who is a long ways away, and as you read that letter you realize that you have been named an heir to an enormous fortune that you did not even know existed and, all of a sudden, you are wealthy beyond your wildest dreams. Think about that for just a minute. You think, this is a windfall. I would like to take a significant portion of this money that I did not know I was going to get and I would like to put it into something that will help the less fortunate. Think about that for a minute. What would you do with that windfall? How would you help the less fortunate?

Now, be honest. How many of you, the first thing you thought of was, I know, I will give the money to the Federal Government.

Now, you might have thought about giving the money to the Salvation Army, you might have thought about giving it to the Red Cross, to a church group, to some other organization, but I will guarantee very few people gathered here in this Chamber today, very few Americans, the very first thing they would have said is, I know, I will give the money to the Federal Government.

That is what this bill is really all about. Let us give faith a chance. We all know deep down in our bones that we have wasted billions of dollars over the last 20 or 30 years in failed social programs run by the Federal bureaucracy. All this bill simply says is, give faith a chance.

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI).

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, my husband, my children and I have among us 100 years of Catholic education. That education has taught us our responsibilities to the poor and the mission of the Gospel of Matthew. Indeed, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. HALL) is the living embodiment of the gospel of Matthew to minister to the needs of the hungry, the homeless, and others in need. That Catholic education has also taught us to oppose discrimination in every place in our country. That is why I have to oppose this legislation, H.R. 7, that is before us today.

I am very proud that Catholic charities is the largest private network of social service agencies in the country, but in order to receive Federal funds, which they do now, Catholic charities and other religious affiliated nonprofits must agree to abide by all appli-

cable antidiscrimination laws and to provide services without religious proselytizing. H.R. 7 would remove those important protections.

So as a Catholic and one driven by the Gospel of Matthew and proud of the work that our nonprofits and all denominations do, what is the problem with this bill? The problem is that today, this House will vote to legalize discrimination as we minister to the needs of the poor. I hope that course of action will not be taken, and I urge my colleagues to oppose this unfair rule and to oppose H.R. 7.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH), a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE), a member of the Committee on Rules, for yielding time to me.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support our Nation's faith-based organizations. I want to mention some people back home who are doing this kind of work. In downtown San Antonio at the Little Church of La Villita, for almost 40 years, people like Cleo Edmonds and David Gross have given their time and resources to feed the hungry. They feed about 100 people each day, primarily single mothers. Some people come in to get a meal; others to get groceries.

In addition to meeting the nutritional needs of those who come seeking help, the Little Church of La Villita meets the spiritual needs in our community, offering prayer and counseling to those who request it.

Some want to tell us that the faithful should leave their faith at the door. But, Mr. Speaker, everyone involved in serving the poor has faith; everyone has convictions. The only difference is that some believe in the power of God and some believe in the power of government.

The Constitution does not envision a government devoid of all religion; rather, it envisions a rich menagerie of faiths, a patchwork of beliefs and convictions, all under the protection of one Constitution.

Whether or not this bill becomes law, the Little Church of La Villita will continue its work. The question is not: Does the Little Church of La Villita need government money? The question is: Does the government need places like the Little Church of La Villita?

Mr. HALL of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS).

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I feel like I am caught between a rock and a hard place. I say that because I support the concepts of faith-based initiatives. I support the elements of this legislation. I think it is going to go a long way towards finding solutions and helping address some of the many social ills and problems.

On the other hand, I do not believe that we can allow any hint of discrimination or the opportunity to discriminate against any segment of our popu-

lation, no matter whether we are dealing with race, color, national origin, sexual orientation, it matters not. Each and every human being in this country must feel that they have equal protection under the law, must know that they are not going to be discriminated against.

While I hope that we will end up at the end of the day having passed this legislation, I hope we will end up at the end of the day sending a message to all of America that we will not allow discrimination in any shape, form, or fashion.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BOEHNER), the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, let me thank the gentlewoman from Ohio for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise in support of President Bush's charitable choice initiative, the Community Solutions Act of 2001. I wish to thank the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) of the Committee on the Judiciary and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMAS), the chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means, for their diligent efforts in crafting this legislation which has taken into account many different points of view.

As chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, I am pleased that the legislation clearly indicates that faith-based organizations will be able to compete to provide services under several programs within our committee's jurisdiction. Every day throughout our Nation, community and faith-based organizations are playing a key role in meeting the needs of many Americans. Whether operating a soup kitchen, helping to build homes, providing child care, or providing training to welfare recipients, community and faith-based organizations are reaching out to others, and, in doing so, improving the quality of life for many Americans.

President Bush has called them "armies of compassion"; and, indeed, these organizations have demonstrated compassion on many fronts: caring for children after school, providing emergency food and shelter, offering mentoring and counseling, uplifting families of prisoners, and helping to rescue young men and women from gangs and violence.

While many of these organizations have had success, some faith-based organizations have faced barriers in accessing Federal funds. H.R. 7, the Community Solutions Act, addresses this problem by making Federal programs friendlier to faith-based organizations. It will enable these organizations to compete for Federal funds and grants on the same basis as other organizations; and, in short, it will ensure that they have a seat at the table with other nonprofit providers.